

**Marketing in Forestry and Wood Industry
International Seminar, 7-8 December 2006, Dubrovnik, Croatia**

Conclusions and Recommendations

FOREST SECTOR CONCLUSIONS

1. Southeast European countries have access potentially to significant European Union funding, including for the forest sector, provided the sector ensures that its needs are adequately reflected in national priorities: Slovenia may have experience that could be useful in this respect.
2. There are differences in the basis for harvesting contracts between Slovenia and other southeast European countries, for example whether they are based on market prices.
3. Accession to the European Union presents opportunities for the forest sector, for example access to new markets, but may also negatively affect the traditional former Yugoslavian markets.
4. The general public is not well informed about sustainable forestry because of a lack of a coordinated promotional programme among producers, governments and associations
5. University level and continuing education/training of professionals working in the industry is missing in many countries in southeast Europe.
6. The absence of any marketing information system (MIS) for forestry and wood products, providing producers, sellers and buyers with information on supply and demand for wood and wood products, is a significant disadvantage for the sector.
7. Landmines in forests represent a great danger in several countries; removing the landmines is expensive and will take many years at present rates of clearance
8. There are problems of illegal felling and illegal hunting
9. The single country approach to resolving common regional forest sector problems is not working.

WOOD PROCESSING SECTOR CONCLUSIONS

1. Wood's versatility and environmental credentials mean that it is well placed to compete with other materials when promoted through trade fairs, with the help of governments.
2. Balkan wood and wood products are sometimes not purchased by governments for lack of green public procurement policies (socially responsible procurement).
3. Market information on collaborators and competitors in the forest sector is missing within the countries of southeast Europe, and outside the region (again, no MIS).
4. Market research models are underdeveloped and market research is currently done independently and not jointly between countries.
5. Regional origin marks and product quality standards (for example Croatian quality and design labels) can help in giving products from the region a distinctive identity and a marketing advantage.
6. High demand for oak and low demand for beech is evident which distorts the market and harvesting.
7. Clusters of similar woodworking industries exist in some countries in southeast Europe, providing an advantage for producers.

8. Education in forest products marketing is insufficient, including at universities and continuing education in industry, both in-class and on-line distance learning models

SEMINAR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Initiate a coordinated, region-wide promotional campaign targeted at improving the southeast Europe forest sector image, including promotion of the sound use of wood and its environmental and natural advantages for the economic benefit of the entire region; start a promotional campaign for local, branded and certified wood products.
- Establish a common, web-based MIS covering all the countries in the region, with levels for government, education, private forest owners and the wood processing industry.
- Investigate why industry was under-represented in the 2006 Dubrovnik seminar and identify and satisfy their needs in the next seminar.
- Strengthen industrial associations, e.g., through clusterization, and build a network of wood-based businesses so that the existing knowledge and contacts can be shared for the benefit of all companies in the region.
- Improve distribution model throughout the wood chain, from forest to final product, for example, support a wood stock exchange idea in Croatia.
- Appeal to governments to create a framework for socially responsible public procurement of wood and wood products.
- Governments should continue to support participation at forestry and wood processing trade fairs.